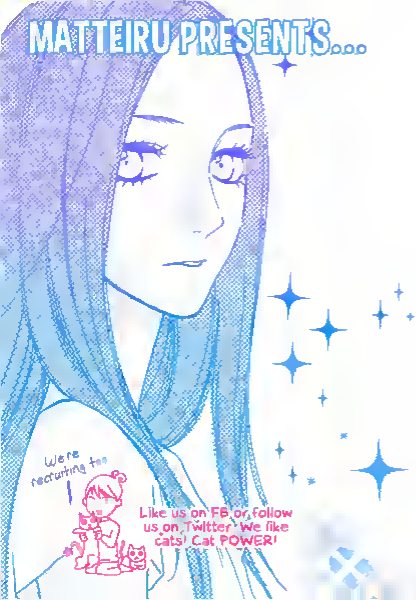

SUGARS 14

BY YAMAMORI MIKA

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TYPESETTER : NATHRAE
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http://www.matteiruscans.com/forums/

Terada Ai, turning 20 in 4 days.
Happy endings aren't real endings.
Not all stories have happy endings.
I'm currently at the height of my indecision.

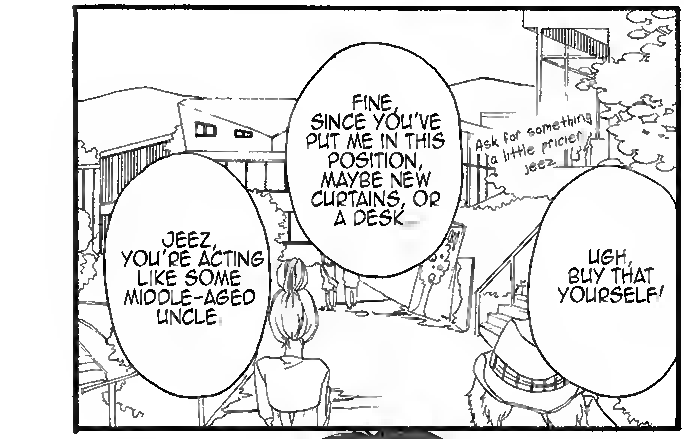
Bittersweet chocolate chip 14

This is Sakura (or something like that), a high school student who has been coming by to flirt with me recently.
CHA ~ SU. ☆
A-I-KU ~ N. ♡
I don't take her seriously at all, but she still comes by every day, persistent.
YOU'RE INTERFERING WITH BUSINESS.
YOU'RE AWFUL! BUT I STILL LIKE YOU. <3
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN GIRLS.
END OF STORY.
I've been bad with girls for as long as I can remember.
I always felt that when it came to girls, having to deal with my older sisters was enough.
TSK
EH... COULD IT BE... YOU'RE GAY-

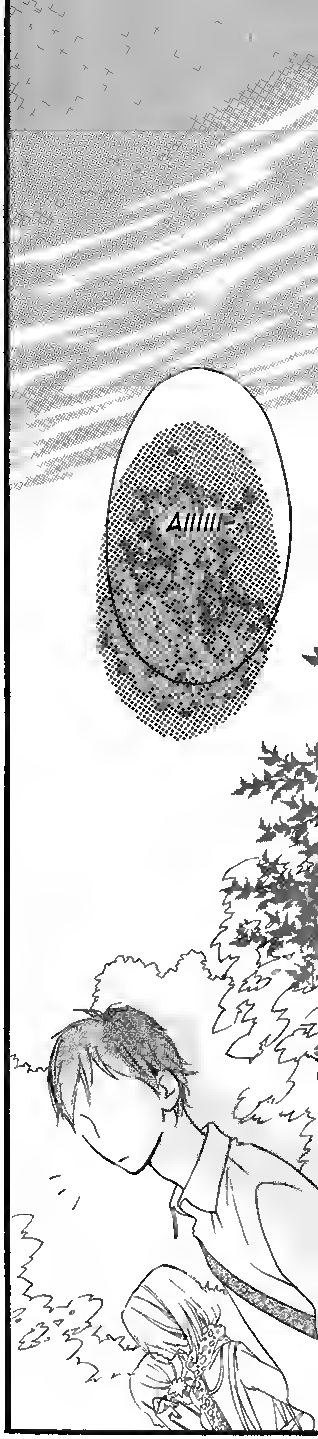
I was always fine as long as I had soccer, some friends and my cat around.
I've only ever been in love once.
THOSE THREE GIRLS HAVE DONE IT AGAIN!
WHO IS FUKUSHIMA?
THE NEW TRANSFER STUDENT.
Honestly Ai-
HOW MANY TIMES DOES THAT MAKE NOW?
Girls are scary-
IT'S FUKUSHI-MA'S SHOES!
WHAT HAPPENED?
?
Now that I think about it... DID someone transfer into our class?
Fukushima... which one are they ...?

At that moment, I knew that Fukushima was a girl.
And
That the slightest thing could act as the trigger for falling in love with someone.
That was my first love.

LET'S HAVE YOUR BIRTHDAY PARTY THIS FRIDAY!
WILL YOUR GIRLFRIEND BE COMING THAT DAY?
Though your birthdays the day before
NAH, I DON'T THINK SHE'LL BE COMING.
AH, YOU CAN JUST GET ME 'PRISON BREAK' FOR A BIRTHDAY PRESENT.


UGH, BUY THAT YOURSELF!
Ask for something a little nicer, jeez.
FINE. SINCE YOU'VE PUT ME IN THIS POSITION, MAYBE NEW CURTAINS, OR A DESK.
JEEZ, YOU'RE ACTING LIKE SOME MIDDLE-AGED UNCLE

So, 6 months earlier.
I'M JUST JOKING, IDIOT.


Aiiiii-

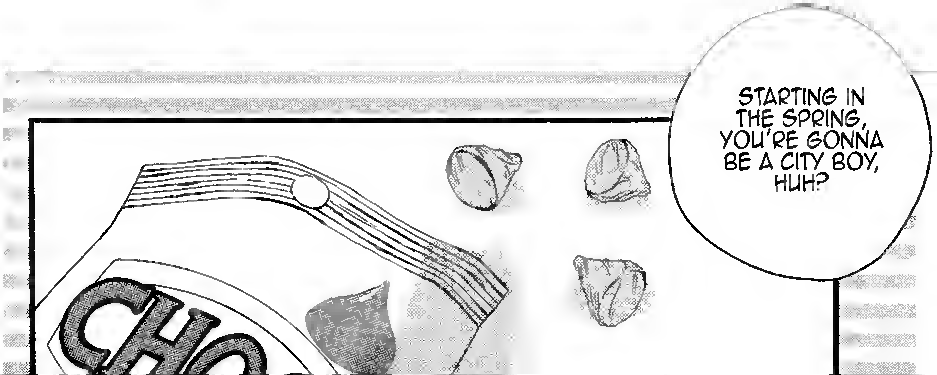
LET'S BREAK UP.
That first love
Was plunged into an epilogue.
Sumire wouldn't say something like that as a joke.
I know that for sure.
My mind went totally white, everything in front of me went black.
I instantly replied.
SHALL WE, THEN?

I under-
stand,
Kevin.

Let me think
about it.

AH,
I DON'T
REALLY
CARE FOR
STORIES
LIKE THESE.
HAHAHA
I FIGURED.
TERADA-KUN
DOESN'T
REALLY SEEM
INTERESTED IN
ROMANCE.

AH SORRY,
WERE YOU
WATCHING?
AH,
GOOD
MORN-
ING.
CLACK
IS THAT
THE NEW
ONE THAT
CAME IN
THIS WEEK?
HOW IS IT?


STARTING IN
THE SPRING,
YOU'RE GONNA
BE A CITY BOY,
HUH?

WELL, LIKE MY MOTHER, ART'S THE ONLY THING I REALLY LIKE...
YOUR ACCEPTANCE INTO ART SCHOOL IS EVEN MORE AMAZING.
I SWEAR, MY FOLKS TALK ABOUT THAT MORE HIGHLY THAN MY COLLEGE STUFF...
EH?
PUT YOUR HAND OUT.
OH, I MANAGED TO GET MY HANDS ON THIS.
PLOP
SORRY FOR KNOCKING OVER
THE CHOCOLATE CHIPS...

Ai.
I DON'T USUALLY DO STUFF LIKE THIS,
BUT ONCE IN A WHILE...
I ... MORE THAN PUDDING, MORE THAN ART, MORE THAN MY MOTHER...
I LOVE YOU.

IT'S LIKE A CHOCOLATE CHIP
ISN'T IT?
Her chocolate flavored kisses.
The mole on her neck
The lovely curve of her back.
The shadow of her eyelashes on her cheeks.

It's embarrassing how much I loved her.
Despite that
Every bit of her.
Why was I unable to say "I don't want ta" at that time?
Let's break up.
GASP
I fell asleep in my jeans.
Ding
Dong
Crack
COMING...
Have I been asleep that long since I stayed up all night with everyone?
What time is it now?
Ding
Dong

click
YES, YES.
GOT IT.
TA
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
♪
DA~
ufufu~
GO RIGHT AHEAD~
THANKS FOR THE FOOD
just given up
Ah.
Damn it.
I've been done in.
TA-DA~

Don't you ever have schoolwork to do?
Even though I was hoping to laze around and sleep all day today...
Now that I think about it...
It's been a while since I've had chocolate, hasn't it?
.....
thump
thump

WA!-
A-ARE YOU OKAY, AI-KUN?!
GUH-
SAKURA..
Was she shocked?
JUST KIDDING!
mean-spirited

O!...WAI-WHAT HAPPENED!?
SORRY I'M OKAY.
I WAS JUST SURPRISED WHEN AI-KUN FACED ME
AND CALLED OUT MY NAME...
Drip
Drip
IF I'M BEING HONEST...
Sumire never once cried in front of me.
- What should I say at a time like this? -

BUT I HAVE SOMEONE THAT'S BEEN WITH ME FOR 5 YEARS THAT I CAN'T LET GO OF.
Dot
YOU'RE NOISY AND PERSISTENT, BUT I THINK YOU'RE CUTE...
I'M SORRY.
YOU SHOULD HAVE HELD ON TO HER AT THAT TIME.
IF SHE REALLY WAS SOMEONE YOU COULDN'T LET GO OF, SHE WOULD BE HERE RIGHT NOW.

beep
I know.
I know that.
ring
ring
ring
ring
How long
ring
ring
[025]
Sumire
080XXXX
EH?
Have things been like this between us?

WE'RE GOING OUT TO EAT NOW, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME TONIGHT THOUGH WE MIGHT BE LATE
ALRIGHT, GOT IT
TALK TO YOU SOON
YOU CAN'T COME FOR CHRISTMAS?
YEAH, WE SUDDENLY GOT ASSIGNED A REPORT, I'M SORRY.
AI!
AH, WELL, I'LL JUST HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS FROM CLUB, THEN.
Did we break our promises to meet.
Since when...
Our texting decreased while the empty "talk to you soon"s increased.
Since when has this been happening?

YOUR CALL COULD NOT BE CONNECTED. PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AFTER THE TONE.
beeeeep
HI.
IT'S ME.
Is this how things are going to end between us?
I'M COMING TO SEE YOU.
RIGHT NOW

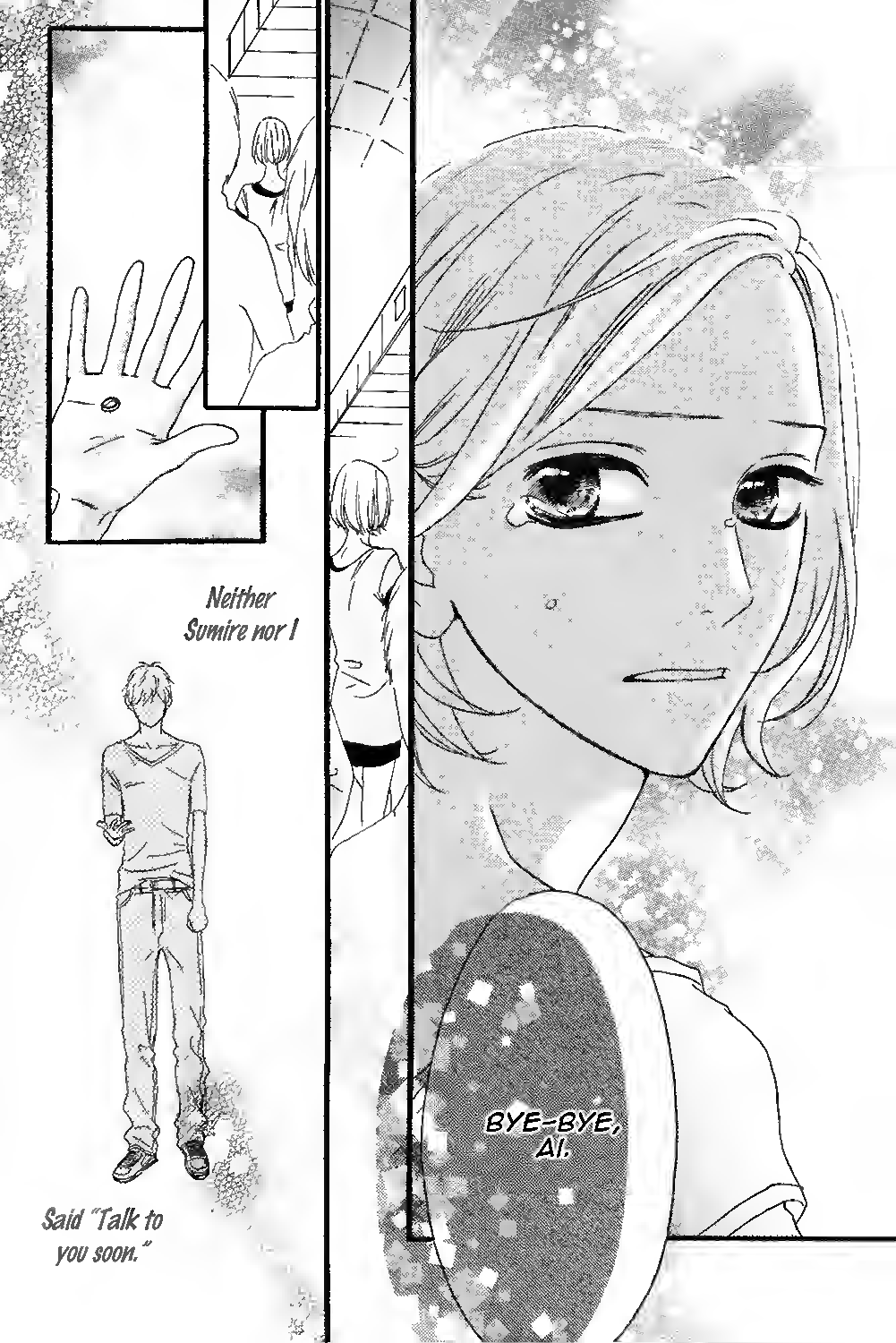
The reasan I couldn't say "I don't want ta" back then
Was because I knew that if I did, Sumire wauld get up and leave.
I might be taa late, but I just might make it in time.
Even if it's anly a 0.1% chance.
The 5 years we've had together.
Her skin
Sumire's voice
Her arms

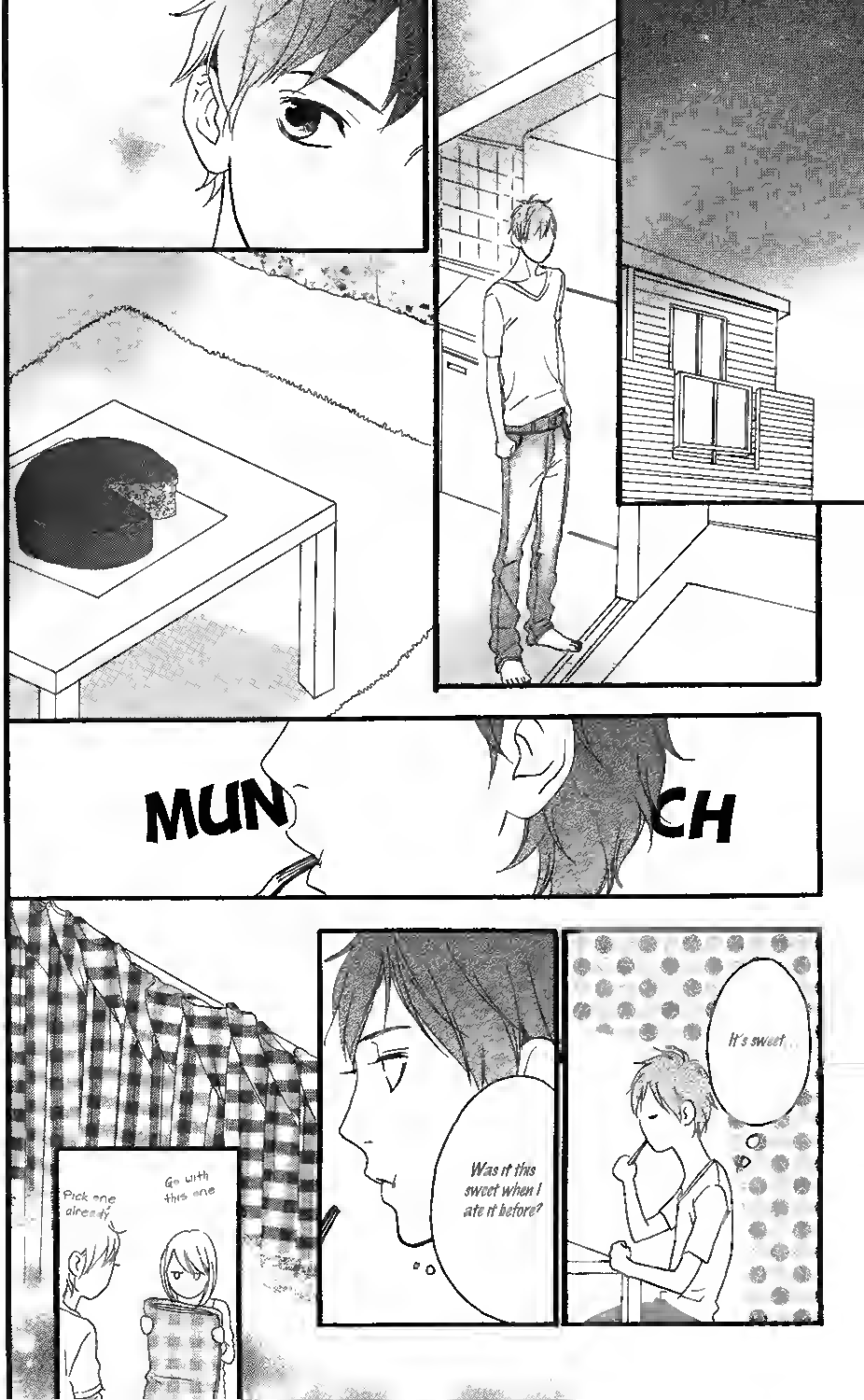
It's too soon to turn all of that into mere memories.
Ai.
Will I make the next one?
7:21
Regular service Non reserved seating
7:30
Non reserved seating
7:38
Boarding for cars 1-4
12

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
I WANTED TO SAY IT TO YOUR FACE,
SO I TRIED COMING HERE.
SUMIRE ..
I'LL
..BE RETURNING THIS.
WELL THEN .
DON'T GO

DON'T GO.
I...
WHEN YOU FIRST WENT AWAY, I WAS SO ANXIOUS AND LONELY, IT FELT LIKE THE WORLD WAS ENDING.
BUT BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY EVERY-DAY LIFE CONTINUED AS USUAL,
AND AI NOT BEING THERE BECAME A GIVEN.

SOMETHING BETWEEN US HAS DIED, WITHOUT A DOUBT.
YOU'VE REALIZED IT TOO, RIGHT?
WE AREN'T ALIVE IN EACH OTHER'S WORLDS ANYMORE.


Neither Sumire nor I
Said "Talk to you soon."
BYE-BYE, AI.


MUN
CH
It's sweet...
Was it this sweet when I ate it before?
Go with this one
Pick one already!

The reason I couldn't say "I don't want to" back then
Was because I knew that if I did, Sumire would up and leave.
Also
I knew that somewhere inside me, I had already given up.
When did I forget the very flavor of chocolate?
When did I stop having time to think about my lover?
When did Sumire become so beautiful?

I loved her.
I loved her.
I really loved her.
I loved her more than anything.
THANK YOU FOR WAITING!
clack

AH...
THANKS FOR THE CAKE THE OTHER DAY.
COULD IT BE YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO TELL ME THAT~?
Oh~ myyy
NO, THOUGH THAT'S PART OF IT.
AS I THOUGHT, I CAN'T RESPOND TO YOUR FEELINGS.
I'M SORRY.
AHHH! AHHH!
I CAN'T HEAR YOUUUUU!
THAT'S ALRIGHT! BEING REJECTED IS A BEGINNING JUST LIKE A GREETING IS!
I'LL WAIT UNTIL AI-KUN'S WOUNDS ARE FULLY HEALED!

Your voice.
Your cheeks.
Will remain a bittersweet memory.
The mole on your neck.
I'll never forget you.
Everything

Bittersweet Chocolate Chip

MAKING A 20-YEAR-OLD MAN THE PROTAGONIST OF A COMIC RUNNING IN MARGARET...IS SOMETHING THAT I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT EVEN NOW, BUT I WON'T LET IT BOTHER ME! ONCE YOU LET THIS STUFF GET TO YOU, THAT'S THE END OF THE LINE, YOU KNOW?

THIS TIME AROUND...OUT OF ALL THE STORIES I'VE DRAWN SO FAR, THIS ONE WORE ME OUT THE MOST. S-SOMEHOW, IT JUST MADE ME SO EXHAUSTED..

[...] BREAK-UPS ARE SO DIFFICULT!
I'M AMAZED BY PEOPLE WHO CAN DRAW THEM WELL, SERIOUSLY...
AHH, I'LL DO MY BEST. YEAH.

ALSO, IF YOU THINK "I'VE COME ALL THIS WAY AND FINALLY GET TO DRAW 3 DIFFERENT FACES, BUT I'M ALREADY USED TO DOING IT THIS ONE WAY!", THAT'S THE END...! THAT SORT OF THOUGHT PROCESS SHOCKED ME MORE THAN ANYTHING. HUH? WHAT A WEIRD AFTERWORD THIS IS.
ANYWAYS, IT'S PRETTY TOUGH, GETTING USED TO DRAWING FACES AND HAIRSTYLES IN THE SAME WAY EVERY TIME...I REALLY HAVE TO DRAW A DIFFERENT LOOKING FACE NEXT TIME..OR SO I SAY, BUT I DON'T REALLY BOTHER WITH THAT SORT OF THING...HEHEHE.

ALSO, IN REGARDS TO THE MOLE BEING REFERRED TO AS A CHOCOLATE CHIP, THAT COMES FROM MY SAD PAST AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE WIPED AT THE MOLE ON MY CHEEK, SAYING "YOU'VE GOT CHOCOLATE ON YOUR FACE." AND THEY DID THAT 3 TIMES OR SO...THOUGH THE LAST TWO TIMES THEY SAID IT WAS TRASH OR SOOT OR SOMETHING...O!!

Sugars Pop-Out Theatre

EHH...
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED DRAWING SEXY OLDER GIRLS... (IN THE FIRST VOLUME, I PUT AN OLDER GIRL IN A SWIMSUIT IN THERE FOR NO REASON.)
I ESPECIALLY LOVE WAISTLINES. ALSO THE BACK AREA. NOW I HAVE MAKO AND YOSHIDA SEIKO PASSIONATELY SAYING "FEMALE BODIES ARE SO WONDERFUL!" ALL THE TIME (ANOTHER PERSON, SHIHO, JUST LAUGHS AT US.) WELL, IT'S JUST MY DESIRES SPEAKING, BUT WHILE MALE BODIES ARE BEAUTIFUL TOO, I THINK THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL LINES OF A FEMALE BODY THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DRAW THEM!
AH, SOMEHOW THIS COMMENT SECTION BECAME REALLY PERVERTED...